

Aug 2<sup>nd</sup> 1914.

My Impressions & Experiences.

April 14<sup>th</sup> 1919.

To begin at the beginning, I, in common with many thousands of others, was leading a hard-earned life at the time the Great War broke out. I was tired of farming, and could see nothing ahead of me except work, and no man had less ambition, or initiative than yours truly. Then, along came the greatest crisis that has ever disturbed either individuals, or possibly, nations. We English have been raised in an atmosphere of martial law, and as a consequence, are naturally inclined to pick up our arms at the first hint of war. But, right here I wish to state that no patriotism, or thoughts of duty led me to enlist, it was the desire for a change, and a rest to my natural egotism, that put me into the ranks. However, almost two years of war had gone by, before I attained my desire, and in the meantime, my eldest brother had gone to France. On Jun 3<sup>rd</sup> 1916, I finally enlisted in Winnipeg, and joined the territorial ranks of the noble 200<sup>th</sup> Batt. I soon settled down to the routine, in fact I was very fond of drill, and except for the physical drill, rather enjoyed myself. We marched around the city, did some company drill up near the C.P.R. depot, and then in July, we moved to Camp Hughes. Soon after we reached there, I went to the hospital for an operation, and spent several weeks there. Then I had sick leave home, & returned to the camp only to qualify for a few inoculations. After this we had harvest leave. Back to camp again, and soon we had real cold weather. Snow & sleet, and wet feet, we did a little of real soldiering there, for a time. Finally, late in October, we moved to Winnipeg. We were quartered in the Galt Building, back of the City Hall. At that time I preferred to sleep out, so we rented a room on William Ave. We had a swell winter, I joined the Signal Section of the Batt, so was relieved of footlock drill, and all we did was to study the Morse Code, flag drill, and route marches. I can see those route

march yet, all the people lined up along the streets, our band playing,  
 etc etc. There is certainly a thrill in wearing a uniform, sometimes!!!  
 At times we had ceremonial parades, military funerals, these were cold affairs,  
 and we had to walk a long way, at times. In the army, a private  
 soldier always gets more honor at his death, than during his life.  
 It was in Winnipeg that I first began to see a few of the many  
 pitfalls that beset the life of a soldier. Women, drink, and gambling,  
 etc etc. I had a sister in the city, I know several people, too,  
 as I kept clear of the streets. But I always feel sorry for boys  
 who have neither sister nor good friends, at times like these. We  
 must never blame the ones who fall, too harshly. Like all barracks, ours  
 was productive of lots of colds, sore throats, etc. In early March, I contracted,  
 first a severe cold, then measles, and finally, a touch of Diphtheria. I had an  
 operation for tonsils, and finally was able to leave the hospital in time to join  
 my battalion, ready to move overseas. I was not feeling very well, that April day  
 when we left Winnipeg, a cold, bleak morning, on April 7th. We had a six  
 days train journey, and I was very glad to leave. There was lots of whisky on  
 that train, and between drinks, fights, and various forms of rookery, we  
 had a rough passage. On our arrival in Halifax, we were turned back to  
 Aldershot Camp, 70 miles from Halifax, and spent three weeks there. Finally  
 we went to Halifax again, and spent three days waiting to embark. I saw  
 more of the seamy side of life there, too, but I guess my guardian angels  
 must have been pretty close, for I managed to keep straight. And then  
 came the great moment, when we embarked, and my first step was taken,  
 to get to the front. I was put on guard, the first thing, and  
 that was an awful night, a dark, with smelly hole for a guard-  
 room, and the motion of the ship. Ugh. I tramped the deck most of  
 the night, trailing my rifle behind me, in a very unobedient way.  
 We had many of these duties, look-outs, etc, and then we had Physical Drill,  
 and last of all, boat-drill. I detected the latter, our salvation, was  
 a raft, awy up on the very top deck, I used to pray that I  
 would never be reduced to using it. When we were two or three days  
 out from Port, two British destroyers came to meet us. I realized then

that we were in the submarine zone. The last day was a rush, we had each to take our own chances, (the ship I mean), and we all had to keep a sharp look out for submarines. I was on guard, one day, and the fog-horn sounded, owing to a mistake, the signal for an enemy out, was given. We came a man, lugging all his equipment, and scared stiff. "Where is it," he said to me. "Where what," says I. "The submarine." I ordered him below, and wondered how my men would get on. We reached Liverpool safely, and on a lovely morning. I have told you of the apple blossoms I saw, and the train ride to Shorncliffe. We were put into a camp for 3 weeks, in a place called Lower Diggate. What with short rations, (124 lbs men to 1 loaf) etc, and a monotonous wait, I was glad when we moved out. Previous to this, however, I had a little scare, one evening. Fast picture, a dark, wet night, and me shivering in bed. Suddenly, a warning is given, "Hoffin overhead," and out I ran, but there was nothing doing. Then came our move to St Martins Plain, and that same day, our first taste of war. You see, until this, I had hardly seen an aeroplane, and on that monstrous day, the Germans made their first daylight raid on England. Shorncliffe is close to Folkestone, and the planes came over that town, bombing all the way. The camp we had just left, was blown to atoms, and we suffered in the new one, too. We could see nothing, only hear a faint hum, and I saw huts, men etc etc all blown up. We lost a lot of men in that do, and I got a fear of an aeroplane that will never leave me. Then we had a week of leave, and I headed for my old home, glad to leave for a few days. On our return, we started to drill in real earnest, no C. E. F. man will ever forget the ceremony carried on at Shorncliffe. We did a little of everything, learned to throw bombs, (I hated them), to use gas-helmets, did a lot of shooting, bayonet fighting, etc etc.

We were all as keen as mustard, and did more work than we ever did later on. I had not reached my objective, then, therefore I was a dutiful man. Then came the final medical exam for France, and we were really ready for the front. (Or so we fondly imagined.)

The English Channel is notorious the world over, as being a rough bit of water. I heartily endorse that. We had to wear life-belts, in case of a submarine attack, and we had weak cocoa given as a stimulant.

Then came Boulogne, an unimpressive seaport town, built on a hill-side. We stayed in a camp one night, and then came the last march to Etaples, a distance of 18 or 20 miles, in full marching order. (Our equipment, rifle, & ammunition weighed about 70 lbs.)

I was all in when we reached Etaples, but oh, what a lovely road, roses all the way, truly France is a lovely country.

We went into tents at this place, and then commenced a terror of a time. Drill, marches, and every form of entertainment known to the mind of a military genius, or ass. This camp was called the Bull Ring, all over France & Belgium. We had sham fights, these were not too bad, we dug holes in the sand to shelter in, we fired dummy ammunition, we sweated in the hot sun, we swore at conditions, and heartily wished to get up the line. (Up the line, always means, into the trenches.) We unlearned all we had laboriously learned in England, we promptly forgot all we learned in Etaples at our next port of call.

Finally, we packed up and moved closer to the line. I ought to have mentioned that I was now on draft for the 107th Batt, a Pioneer Batt, of the 1st Can. Div. Each Division had a complete Batt, for digging trenches, putting up wire entanglements, building roads etc etc. We moved to a place called — (I need my diary to supply names.)

I think though our first stop was Calonne - Richart. We were attached to the 1st Entrenching Coy, and had the usual formula of drill etc.

Then we moved to Blanchy, and I realized what war was. All that remained of this, a town larger than Rathwell, a little, was a heap of white chalk stones, no walls, not a roof in the whole place. Desolate, well, it has to be seen to be understood. It is at night that these places looked so forlorn, no lights, only the moon shining on the ruins, ah, I shall never forget that scene of complete ruin. From here, we did our first real work, digging a reserve line of trenches, a King Ridge. This hill was the scene of a terrible battle on April 9th, 1917, and we saw evidences of it. It is a long low hill, and every inch of ground was torn over & over again by shells. We dug up shells, wire, and scores of dead bodies, it was an awful job, I had a row with a chap, one day, he used to rob these dead bodies, take money, and one I saw him taking a ring off a finger. I simply hated that man, he was as close to being an animal as I ever saw one. We had about 4 miles to walk to our work every day, and oh, we used to be tired of it. One day I said to Harris, "let's take a holiday, today." So I pinged a wire, and he had to help me home. He ha. Now we did look around that sunny afternoon, and watched a big 15 in gun firing etc. I had funny impressions in those days, used to argue with my chums on all sorts of subjects, I remember a half breed, he must have been a Catholic, I had an argument with him about Sir Wilfrid Laurier. I believe he could have killed me. I also had strong views on the subject of the English Monarchy. Previous to my period in France, I would argue in favour of kings, but now I am rather inclined the other way. In August we joined our Batt, the 107th, and after a short rest, we moved up close to the line. None of our experience, so far, had not brought me into contact with much of actual warfare, we had a pretty fair time at Blanchy, could move around in daylight, and never hardly heard a shell explode.

Our first move was to Bulz-gency, a town near the lines, but in a fair state of preservation. Lots of shops, churches, etc. When moving up, I saw my first shell explode, about 300 yards away. One of the men near me fell flat on his face, but in those days a shell never worried me. From here on, I was to realize just how rotten a pioneer life could be. We always worked at night, may a glorious moonlight night I have swung a pick, and handled a shovel, and called down wrath on the heads of all a sandy for starting a war. We were soon moved to Lievin, a town near to Lens, at that time a hot corner for Canadians. This part of France used to produce large quantities of coal. Hence the German anxiety to secure Lens and surrounding towns. We lived in cellars in Lievin, dark, unwholesome places. It always seemed so unnatural, to me, sleeping until noon, and starting out at night, working until early morning, and then home again. The first night that we were heavily shelled, I can see and feel, yet. We were making a narrow trench deep. It was a warm night, and suddenly, without any warning, the shells began to come over. They were well aimed, too, we all laid down in the trench, and for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours, never lifted a hand. Shells burst on our trench, above us, and in it, and when it was all over, we were half buried with dirt & stores. None of my chums were hit, but one of our Corporals was buried. We dug him out, and he soon recovered. I could hear some praying, and one young fellow was so scared, he jumped up and ran along the trench over us. I can feel his feet on my head, yet, and I guess I covered him not a little. I remember another awful night in Lievin, when we had a gas attack. We were just starting out to work when the gas shells began to come over, hundreds of them, they made a peculiar noise of their own, and when they landed, all you could hear was a soft, put. I never saw so much gas before or after that, I can see Harris, yet, in the dim candle-light, we could not speak with these things on, but sometimes we took them off, to argue a point of Hq, only to put them on again.

Sometimes in my dreams, I can picture those endless nights, walking through miles of trenches, machine guns barbing away, shells going over our heads, and bursting away back, and smell the various gases, filthy trenches, dug-out, and bodies. One night we were halted in a tunnel, shells were falling near the mouth of it. The Officer was too scared to lead us out, we always waited for orders, like good soldiers. A long came our Major, a proper dare-devil of a man. "What are you all doing here," he said. "Waiting for orders, sir", we said. He swore, hurried up the Officer, & led the way out. All my chums were behind me, and when I reached the mouth of the tunnel, I yelled, "About turn," and away we went back in. It was great sport, we missed a night's work, and no one knew who had given the order. Another night we went to work, and on the way, passed a lot of tools all piled in a bag, near the trench. On our arrival at the place where we had to labour & earn our \$1.10, we found that our own tools were missing. Never a man opened his mouth, about the tools we had passed, but some fool of a Lance-Corporal, evidently anxious for a raise, told our Officer about them. Oh, didn't we bless him, we nearly had a rest. Another time we made three attempts to dig a trench, and were shelled out each time. Then we moved off. When under shell-fire, a persons mind becomes a confused & conflicting blur of ideas and thoughts. You wonder if you will get hit, speculate just where you would like to be hit, and finally say, "Oh well, if it comes, it comes". What a life, thought, when you look back on it, working from 7 pm to 1 or 2 am, home & a drink of rum, and a breakfast, sleeping until noon, writing letters, or shaving, or something, supper at 5.30 pm, and then etc. Hardly daring to show yourself in daylight, and then sneaking around like a thief. The place, herein, always had a bad name, there were lots of batteries around there, and the town was a regular trap for idle soldiers. I remember we took a walk around the place, one day, and came to a cross-road, it was called Hell-Fire Corner, and it lived up to its name. We crossed there mighty fast, but not very too soon. Whig Bangs were rather the rule there, instead of the exception. I will explain, here, the different types of guns & shells we heard and saw. All quiet firing guns, using a small shell, were called Whig-Bangs, for a very simple

reason, they fired almost on a level, and when in line with them, all you heard was, Bang, Zip, Bang, if you were good or lively, you dodged, and if not, you, well, didn't. Large naval guns also fire with the gun in a horizontal position, but all howitzers have the barrel of the gun in almost a perpendicular position. Now these different guns all have their own particular use, + range. A small field gun will send a small shell up to a mile or so. Then we have them up to 20 miles. The howitzers shells could be heard seconds before they even passed over us, the big shells sounded like a train, moving through the air. By this rule, if you could hear a shell coming, you were generally safe, for it would be almost over you when you actually heard it. Gas shells, being filled with liquid, made a soft, soughing kind of sound. Then on many noises to contend with, like over-head staplers for instance, they made a terrific noise, and were very dangerous at certain angles. I have often had them burst directly over me, and seen me hit, a considerable distance away. Then we had trench mortars, they came on with a fiery tail behind them, described a perfect arc, and landed with a soul-inspiring bang. Machine gun bullets have a wicked sound, too, zip-zip, and then it was time to keep your head low. We were working at one place, and they took us up the line in a light railway. Well, we had to wait for the train to take us home, and as we sat around, suddenly Fritz began to pester us with machine guns. I heard them hitting the planks, and humming around like bees, so a bunch of us started off down the track. Presently along came the train, we climbed on, and then the old Jimmie decided to have a shell or two. You, that old train did turn along. We kept clear of light railway after that, they were a regular drawing card for casualties. I remember on that interesting evening, a small party of us had a special job, fixing up a fire-trap, in an advanced trench. On the way in, a bullet by some peculiar chance, struck an iron post at the top of the trench, and ricocheted down the trench. It passed over my head (fortunately I was short) and hit a big chap behind me, in the shoulder. We had to carry him about two miles, (and we did not half bless him) and all the time he said, "I'm dying. But I only got a nice trip to Blighty for several months. He gave me a cigar case. I had with him, I have it yet. The same man, previous to this nearly caused my friend. He was new to the line, and was very nervous. Well, one night, this same little party of ours, were working in an extremely narrow trench, and suddenly, on our front, just in front of us, started a raid on the German sector. These raids, I may say, were the invention of the Canadians, and were used to capture a few prisoners, get some information, and keep the wily Japs on the alert. Just when they



started, I was enjoying seeing the shells go over, and then the counter attack  
took place. We were in a good spot for collecting stray bullets, and shells,  
so we decided to hunt cover. Now this big chap was at the far end of  
our line of men, and the word was passed along for him to run for a  
day-out. However he was scared stiff, and refused to move. I was at  
the other end, anxious to move, too. Finally I did move, and his native  
jack rabbit had nothing on him for speed. He passed the day-out at  
40 miles per hour, & we saw him no more for several hours. By the time  
my turn came, the shells were like autumn leaves, falling fast. Just as  
I passed under a little bridge, I heard a cump, and a fair-sized shell  
landed ten feet above my head. Did I linger to gather roses?!! No.  
It is perhaps better to just describe how our trenches and the cumps were laid out.  
First we have the front line trenches, parallel to each other. Then, close behind,  
were close supports, another line of trenches, also parallel to the first one. And also  
the reserve line some little distance back. The communication trenches were always  
more dangerous, as they were at right angle to the front line trenches, and shells &  
bullets could come right into them. Ahead of the front line, and between these  
two places was No. 100 Land, a wind & awful place, torn by shells of both  
sides, covered with wire entanglements, and a right unwholesome place to be found  
in. Flare lights were used, a small shell like a large shot-gun shell,  
when fired, they described a high arc, and burst like a star. Then, when  
they struck the ground, they had an after-glow, ~~with~~ which showed up every  
single thing for hundreds of yards around. I can picture one night, we  
were putting up a wire entanglement, and just as we would begin to work,  
it would go a star-shell, and we dare not move a muscle. Then it would  
be as dark as pitch, and when we carried the rolls of wire, we would fall  
head-long into a shell-hole. These little holes, (sometimes 7 or 10 feet deep,)  
were usually half full of mud and water, a nice cool bath for the unhelpful  
chap who slipped in. If on mutual and intelligent every spied us, one came a  
few mortar, or a stream of bullets, I can hear them ticking on that wire,  
now. What a life, working in rain and mud, snow and ice, sometimes too tired  
to care about being hit, and again, taking great precautions to self escape.  
Then we moved to Petit King, and were billeted in real day-outs. A woful  
overlying, deep, damp holes, full of rats and filthy with vermin. We were  
so used to the latter by this time that they had ceased to trouble us,  
but we kept up a continual war fare on them. We had a man with  
no, ~~name~~ Jolly, a terror to smoke cigarettes, he was death on rats.

One night I decided to slay a particularly friendly old rat, for the sole reason that it ate his bread and cheese. He armed himself with a long and wicked looking dagger, got in a good supply of smoke, and waited. In the dark watches of the night I heard a mighty yell, and a smothered impression on all our muddy rats. Poor old Jerry, making a mighty stalk at the rat, hit his own toe, and away went the rat. My, we did laugh. We had a tough time at that place. It rained every day for weeks, and at night we had to dig cable trenches, each man had a piece to do, a yard long, and 7 feet deep. Now I was to get in a little underground work. Our spades were about 3' 6" long, and in checking over the work, we put two spades on top of each other, to show the Officer that we had dug 7 feet. I used to lean the lower spade away from the side, and may a time I got away with 5 feet or less. One night, dark as pitch, I was working next to T.H., and he was standing with his hand on the top of his spade. Down came my pick, square on his hand, my I did not mean. I secured a new pair of boots, then, they must have weighed 20 lbs a piece. In two days I did a little unweaking on them, and secured a lighter pair. Another pair of clothes was a little frayed, but our Quartermaster refused to give me a new pair. So with a brick and an old army razor, I put two years on them clothes, and he said "My, you wore them out quick." We had fairly well used to the life, shells & bullets did not bother me much, only bombs. We had little of them, that fall's winter, until we moved to Jpres. We moved to the latter place in mid-October. We marched up, stopping at different towns enroute. Whenever we stopped, we used to visit orchards, to the great disgust of our worthy allies, the French. I used to sample the native wine, too, Vin Blanc and Vin Rouge. It was better stuff, but the champagne was good. (You see I am telling everything, good, bad & indifferent). I never drank a great deal, only now and then when I wished to forget what war was, and how miserable I was. I cannot find any excuse for a man drinking now, but when a man is seeing too much of trouble, and has a bad taste in his mouth it is good to forget, in any way it all. Then we reached Jpres, and a new desolate and dreary country, I have never seen. Mud, mud, and then some, we lived in it, worked in it, and sometimes, slept in it. For three weeks I never had my clothes off, dirty, when. We could not sleep for shells & bombs, my I was scared there. We had a pleasant little stroll of about 5 miles to work, sometimes day work, and mostly nights.

Our chief task was building a plank road, on which to move up the guns. For a week, all was well, the plank road was spotted, and we were pottered, to use a common phrase. Each night, at a certain hour, we would come a salvo of shells, and the same in the morning. There was a dump, then, called Three Farm Dump. (A Dump is a place where supplies for the various branches of warfare are stored, flanks, wire, trench mats, shells, etc etc). We carried wet soggy planks from there, at times two miles, on our shoulders, two men to each plank, and when the overhead shrapnel burst over us, we would put the old plank on our heads, to insure greater protection. (Or so we thought, anyway.) There was a dressing station there, a favourite loafing place for tired soldiers, & hot cocoa was served out to all & sundry. One night a plane flew tried to drop a bomb on it, he missed, however, and they dropped in the mud, 50 feet from the nose of your humble servant. I decided to move, in a slight hurry, but I surely blessed the mud, for once. There real, honest to goodness, bombs that close, sending up a geyser of mud, as a great incentive to a move of some kind, with or without orders from the Officer in charge. We had a chum then, named English, from Skordale. He was very young, and very nervous. When we were all in bed, and a plane would come over, away he would run. I never knew where, and returned when it was all over. It is funny he was never hit, I used to pull my tin hat over my head, and wonder if the one had my name & number on it. On clear moonlight nights, a plane came over, and dropped three bombs, one on each side of our tent, I saw two streaks of fire, and my heart was in my mouth, believe me. Another day I was talking to a chum on the road, and suddenly over came a plane, heading right for us. He ~~survived~~ ~~dived~~ ~~into~~ a valley, and crump, crump, and up went a bunch of smoke. The plank road was a regular man-trot, we were working on them one fine morning, and over came a squadron of German planes, 13 all told. They flew pretty low, and we sure kept them, but I was good and scared and waited for a bomb, but none came, that trip. We saw lots of gun sights, then, mules and horses buried in mud, and left there, and every day or night, dozens of casualties. I remember one in particular, the German prisoners were carrying a wounded man down the line, and over came a shell, they laid down the ditch, waited for the explosion, and then on they went again, through mud & water. These same planes were good at that task on our side, but rather rough on the other side. Another night I had a proper tough time. We had made our trip up the road with planks, and so we wanted to return, the rest party were caught by a regular storm of shells. It was pure luck that we were not in the same place. It was a dark, dark night, and of course several men were killed & some

badly wounded. Four of our party were detailed to carry a man to the rear. Away we went with the chap, and we had to pass in front of a battery of big guns, all firing to beat the cars. The concussion was so great that every time one fired, my old tin hat jumped off my head. Just picture, walking in front of a gun, firing a shell weighing about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a ton, and you can see what it was some noise. We carried that man about 3 miles. To crown all, the Corporal & one of the men on the party were awarded the M. M., for volunteering to carry out wounded. What a farce.

F.H. I had on real narrow skates, though. We were hiking along one dark night, and suddenly I saw a light, and pulled Harry back. A small gun fired across the road so close that the flames scorch'd on faces. Another step, and we would have been 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup>.

I describe the town of Ypres to you, its remnant of a once wonderful cathedral, Cloth Hall etc. & also the owners, the royalty of the age. It was in the old market square that I said goodbye to Dick, I will see that spot as long as I have memory. This square was shelled at regular intervals, but not many a poor soldier was caught there. Dick got his first wound near Ypres, in the winter of 15 & 16. A small piece of shell hit him over one eye. Every morning that we ever went up that road, there was a row of bodies laid out, men caught at work the previous night. That is the terrible side of war, one minute a man is well, going with his pals, the next, he may be hurled into eternity.

And then came our return to France, we were as happy as larks, marching down from there, and then we were taken in lorries, or to be exact, old discarded London buses. I forget when we landed up, but shortly after that we moved to Somme. We lived in old cellars, there, and had a great time for a month. It was a quiet front, the weather was dry and frosty, and we often had dog-work. I laughed one night, we were taking up a light railway, loading the ties on a hand-car, and taking them up the line. There was a branch line or junction, and as such would have it, the switch was locked. Down we went, as hard as possible, sitting on this load of ties, and hit this switch. Bump went the load, all over the landscape, a great mess on a quiet, peaceful war-time evening. Another time, we were building a new branch railway and the flux decided to live things up a bit. We laid down the rails, and ties, and they went again. Finally we made a road for it, laying rails, pushing ties under, and spiking them. It was ticklish work and a day or so later, you could not find a trace of that line with a microscope. We could build fire in our cellars, had pretty good food, and got well rested up after the Ypres affair. I looked 10 years older for that month in Belgium. We larked around there, saving the lead a little, dodged a few parades, and work parties, and played the old soldier, in every particular. Have you any idea what "sparing the lead, is"? It means, literally, making believe you are sick, when you are really as fit as a fiddle.!!

From Souley, we moved to Auzel, and spent Xmas there. We were out of the line for a good spell, here, resting up for a new drive. We slept in a house, here, on a tiled floor, it was rather a pleasant change from the barns and pig-sty. You see, most of the French farmsteads are built in the form of a square, with house on one side, and various stables on the other three sides. The refuse heap was often in the centre, and it a splendid way to manage things. Soon after the New Year we moved to Maroc, a much battered up village. We slept in cellars then, had coal fires when we managed to steal it, or wood if it was more convenient. One morning I was just up, and lighting the fire, when a barrage opened up on the place. I was in front of the fire, blowing at it, when crump, a shell came through the upstairs wall, and a blast of air came down the chimney. A young corporal was just at the upstairs door, and he was killed instantly. We never heard him at all, until our Major came down and ordered us to warn all the men to leave the cellars. It was a warm job, dodging shells, diving into cellars, and tearing around. We had just got three chaps out of one cellar, when a shell went right into it, and made a little havoc of the furniture. Then I had a leave to England, and surely did enjoy it, Westmoreland looked nice & pleasant after France. Going back, I met Charlie Harris in Boulogne, and we hung around there for a few days, evading the Military Police, and spending the balance of our money. After a few narrow escapes at capture, we decided to return to the Batt. A good bombing raid on the camp helped us to decide, so off we went. We had quite a hunt for them

and when we finally did, the O.C. fined us both for being a day  
 over leave. We both told a pathetic tale of a mad rush for the  
 boat train in London, but he was adamant, and soaked us 14 days  
 pay. It is of no avail to argue with a Colonel, I soon discovered that.  
 The first night up the line, we had a warm time. We were  
 marching up a road in two lines, and a big shell landed in  
 the road ahead of us. The nose-cap, flew straight down the line,  
 and I can see it yet, humming along. It was a damp night  
 and we were showered with gas shells, so I was glad when  
 time came to return home. I had an iron bedstead,  
 then, and of course white sheet & pillow cases. The bed had lost a  
 leg in the war, and sagged a trifle, the paint was scratched,  
 and the mattress had inhabitants, but it beat the cold floor all  
 hollow. Then we had a spot in dugouts near Arras. One day a couple of men were  
 leaving a bath in a shell-hole, when all at once a couple of shells came over.  
 I saw two figures being a fair sprint for a dugout, very lightly clad, indeed.  
 After the rain party was then, with a team, and every wire team and wagon,  
 in a general direction of the base. We had some neat roads to travel around them.  
 Shelled all the time and we every day had them along them. Soon after this, we  
 moved out for a long rest, ready for the big July offensive. We had a long time  
 I was taking up double-bearing, and of course fine Harris wool, too. We had a  
 short lecture from the M.C. in the morning, then we played cards, and in the  
 afternoon played baseball. I ~~try~~ tried hard to find out the difference between  
 the ~~old~~ ~~new~~ ~~way~~ ~~of~~ ~~doing~~ ~~things~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~old~~ ~~way~~ ~~of~~ ~~doing~~ ~~things~~.  
 could be. They a thousand felt were administered. (The patients usually show them very  
 and of all the dodges. If a man ate a little bit of soap, or smoked a cigarette  
 dipped in iodine, his heart would pound something frightfully, and a wet towel  
 bound around a person here, and the men were founded, made it swell up to  
 an alarming extent. Soap was hard to divine, also internal troubles. Having tried  
 a few little dodges myself, I got the habit of looking for symptoms. The  
 and they was, if the temperature was normal, the man was well, or then you are  
 The we practiced bandaging, and various other things, but to be candid, we  
 mostly laid on our backs and slept peacefully. The weather was ideal, warm  
 and bright, and thus the days of waiting passed by. We attended the  
 Divisional Hospital, and saw Borden, Gray, etc etc.

Miss Florence Anderson,

# 64.

Postville P.O.

Iowa.

