



"OVER THE TOP"

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO WENT

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MACHINE GUNNER, SERVING IN FRANCE

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(Continued from last week.)

From the recruiting depot Lloyd was taken, with many others, in charge of a sergeant, to the training depot at Aldershot, where he was given an outfit of khaki, and drew his other equipment. He made a fine-looking soldier, except for the slight shrinking in his shoulders and the hunted look in his eyes.

At the training depot it does not take long to find out a man's character, and Lloyd was promptly dubbed "windy." In the English army "windy" means cowardly.

The smallest recruit in the barracks looked on him with contempt, and was not slow to show it in many ways.

Lloyd was a good soldier, learned quickly, obeyed every order promptly, never groused at the hardest fatigues. He was afraid to. He lived in deadly fear of the officers and "noncoms" over him. They also despised him.

One morning about three months after his enlistment Lloyd's company was paraded, and the names picked out for the next draft to France were read. When his name was called, he did not step out smartly, two paces to the front, and answer cheerfully, "Here, sir," as the others did. He just faintly in the ranks and was carried to barracks amid the sneers of the rest.

That night was an agony of misery to him. He could not sleep. Just cried and whimpered in his bunk, because on the morrow the draft was to sail for France, where he would see death on all sides, and perhaps be killed himself. On the steamer, crossing the channel, he would have jumped overboard to escape, but was afraid of drowning.

Arriving in France, he and the rest were huddled into cattle cars. On the side of each appeared in white letters, "Hommes 40, Chevaux 8." After hours of bumping over the uneven French roadbeds they arrived at the training base of Rouen.

At this place they were put through a week's rigid training in trench warfare. On the morning of the eighth day they paraded at ten o'clock, and were inspected and passed by General H—, then were marched to the quartermaster's, to draw their gas helmets and trench equipment.

At four in the afternoon they were again hustled into cattle cars. This time the journey lasted two days. They disembarked at the town of Frevent and could hear a distant dull booming. With knees shaking, Lloyd asked the sergeant what the noise was, and nearly dropped when the sergeant replied in a somewhat bored tone:

"Oh, them's the guns up the line. We'll be up there in a couple o' days or so. Don't worry, my laddie, you'll see more o' 'em than you want before you get 'ome to Blighty again, that is, if you're lucky enough to get back. Now lend a hand there unloadin' them cars, and quit that everlastin' shakin'. I believe yer scared." The last with a contemptuous sneer.

They marched ten kilos, full pack, to a little dilapidated village, and the sound of the guns grew louder, constantly louder.

The village was full of soldiers who turned out to inspect the new draft, the men who were shortly to be their mates in the trenches, for they were going "up the line" on the morrow, to "take over" their certain sector of trenches.

The draft was paraded in front of battalion headquarters and the men were assigned to companies.

Lloyd was the only man assigned to D company. Perhaps the officer in charge of the draft had something to do with it, for he called Lloyd aside and said:

"Lloyd, you are going to a new company. No one knows you. Your bed will be as you make it, so for God's sake, brace up and be a man. I think you have the stuff in you, my boy, so good-by and the best of luck to you."

The next day the battalion took over their part of the trenches. It happened to be a very quiet day. The artillery behind the lines was still, except for an occasional shell sent over to let the Germans know the gunners were not asleep.

In the darkness, in single file, the company slowly wended their way down the communication trench to the front line. No one noticed Lloyd's white and drawn face.

After they had relieved the company in the trenches, Lloyd, with two of the old company men, was put on guard in one of the traverses. Not a shot was fired from the German lines, and no one paid any attention to him crouched on the firing step.

On the first time in, a new recruit is not required to stand with his head "over the top." He only "sits it out," while the older men keep watch.

At about ten o'clock, all of a sudden, he thought hell had broken loose, and crouched and shivered up against the parapet. Shells started bursting, as he imagined, right in their trench, when in

fact they were landing about a hundred yards in rear of them, in the second lines.

One of the older men on guard, turning to his mate, said:

"There goes Fritz with those d—d trench mortars again. It's about time our artillery 'taped' them, and sent over a few. Well, I'll be d—d, where's that blighter of a draft man gone to? There's his rifle leaning against the parapet. He must have legged it. Just keep your eye peeled, Dick, while I report it to the sergeant. I wonder if the fool knows he can be shot for such tricks as leavin' his post?"

Lloyd had gone. When the trench mortars opened up, a maddening terror seized him and he wanted to run, to get away from that horrible din, anywhere to safety. So quietly sneaking around the traverse, he came to the entrance of a communication trench, and ran madly and blindly down it, running into traverses, stumbling into muddy holes, and falling full length over trench grids.

Groping blindly, with his arms stretched out in front of him, he at last came out of the trench into the village, or what used to be a village, before the German artillery razed it. Mixed with his fear, he had a peculiar sort of cunning, which whispered to him to avoid all sentries, because if they saw him he would be sent back to that awful destruction in the front line, and perhaps be killed or maimed. The thought made him shudder, the cold sweat coming out in beads on his face.

On his left, in the darkness, he could make out the shadowy forms of trees; crawling on his hands and knees, stopping and crouching with fear at each shell-burst, he finally reached an old orchard and covered at the base of a shot-scarred apple tree.

He remained there all night, listening to the sound of the guns and ever praying, praying that his useless life would be spared.

As dawn began to break, he could discern little dark objects protruding from the ground all about him. Curiosity mastered his fear and he crawled to one of the objects, and there, in the uncertain light, he read on a little wooden cross:

"Pte. H. S. Wheaton, No. 1670, 1st London Regt. R. F. Killed in action, April 25, 1916. R. I. P." (Rest in Peace).

When it dawned on him that he had been hiding all night in a cemetery his reason seemed to leave him, and a mad desire to be free from it all made him rush madly away, falling over little wooden crosses, smashing some and trampling others under his feet.

In his flight he came to an old French dugout, half caved in and partially filled with slimy and filthy water.

Like a fox being chased by the hounds, he ducked into this hole, and threw himself on a pile of old empty sandbags, wet and mildewed. Then—unconsciousness.

On the next day, he came to; far distant voices sounded in his ears. Opening his eyes, in the entrance of the dugout he saw a corporal and two men with fixed bayonets.

The corporal was addressing him: "Get up, you white-livered blighter! Curse you and the day you ever joined D company, spolling their fine record! I'll be you up against the wall, and a good job too. Get hold of him, men, and if he makes a break, give him the bayonet, and send it home, the cowardly sneak. Come on, you, move, we've been looking for you long enough."

Lloyd, trembling and weakened by his long fast, tottered out, assisted by a soldier on each side of him.

They took him before the captain, but could get nothing out of him but: "For God's sake, sir, don't have me shot, don't have me shot!"

The captain, utterly disgusted with him, sent him under escort to division headquarters for trial by court-martial, charged with desertion under fire.

They shoot deserters in France.

During his trial, Lloyd sat as one dazed, and could put nothing forward in his defense, only an occasional "Don't have me shot!"

His sentence was passed: "To be shot at 3:35 o'clock in the morning of May 18, 1916." This meant that he had only one more day to live.

He did not realize the awfulness of his sentence; his brain seemed paralyzed. He knew nothing of his trip, under guard, in a motor lorry to the sandbagged guardroom in the village, where he was dumped on the floor and left, while a sentry with a fixed bayonet paced up and down in front of the entrance.

Bully beef, water and biscuits were left beside him for his supper.

The sentry, seeing that he ate nothing, came inside and shook him by the shoulder, saying in a kind voice: "Cheero, laddie, better eat some-

thing. You'll feel better. Don't give up hope. You'll be pardoned before morning. I know the way they run these things. They're only trying to scare you, that's all. Come now, that's a good lad, eat something. It'll make the world look different to you."

The good-hearted sentry knew he was lying about the pardon. He knew nothing short of a miracle could save the poor lad.

Lloyd listened eagerly to his sentry's words, and believed them. A look of hope came into his eyes, and he ravenously ate the meal beside him.

In about an hour's time, the chaplain came to see him, but Lloyd would have none of him. He wanted no pardon; he was to be pardoned.

The artillery behind the lines suddenly opened up with everything they had. An intense bombardment of the enemy's lines had commenced. The roar of the guns was deafening. Lloyd's fears came back with a rush, and he covered on the earthen floor with his hands over his face.

The sentry, seeing his position, came in and tried to cheer him by talking to him:

"Never mind them guns, boy, they won't hurt you. They are ours. We are giving you the Boches a dose of their



He Betrayed His Country.

own medicine. Our boys are going over the top at dawn of the morning to take their trenches. We'll give 'em a taste of cold steel with their sausages and beer. You just sit tight now until they relieve you. I'll have to go now, lad, as it's nearly time for my relief, and I don't want them to see me a-talkin' with you. So long, laddie, cheero."

With this, the sentry resumed the pacing of his post. In about ten minutes time he was relieved, and a D company man took his place.

Looking into the guardhouse, the sentry noticed the cowering attitude of Lloyd, and, with a sneer, said to him:

"Instead of whimpering in that corner, you ought to be saying your prayers. It's badly conscripts like you what's spollin' our record. We've been out here high on eighteen months, and you're the first man to desert his post. The whole battalion is laughin' and pokin' fun at D company, bad luck to you! but you don't get another chance to disgrace us. They'll put your lights out in the mornin'."

After listening to this tirade, Lloyd, in a faltering voice, asked: "They are not going to shoot me, are they? Why, the other sentry said they'd pardon me. For God's sake—don't tell me I'm to be shot!" and his voice died away in a sob.

"Of course, they're going to shoot you. The other sentry was just a kid-din' you. Jest like old Smith. Always a-tryin' to cheer some one. You ain't got no more chance o' bein' pardoned than I have o' gettin' in to be colonel of my 'batt.'"

When the fact that all hope was gone finally entered Lloyd's brain, a calm seemed to settle over him, and rising to his knees, with his arms stretched out to heaven, he prayed, and all of his soul entered into the prayer.

"O, good and merciful God, give me strength to die like a man! Deliver me from this coward's death. Give me a chance to die like my mates in the fighting line, to die fighting for my country. I ask this of thee."

A peace, hitherto unknown, came to him, and he crouched and covered no more, but calmly waited the dawn, ready to go to his death. The shells were bursting all around the guardroom, but he hardly noticed them.

While waiting there, the voice of the sentry, singing in a low tone, came to him. He was singing the chorus of the popular trench ditty:

I want to go home, I want to go home. I don't want to go to the trenches no more. Where the "whizzbangs" and "sausages" roar galore. Take me over the sea, where the Allemands can't get at me. Oh, my, I don't want to die! I want to go home.

Lloyd listened to the words with a strange interest, and wondered what kind of a home he would go to across the Great Divide. It would be the only home he had ever known.

Suddenly there came a great rushing through the air, a blinding, a deafen-

ing report, and the sandbag walls of the guardroom toppled over, and then—blackness.

When Lloyd recovered consciousness, he was lying on his right side, facing what used to be the entrance of the guardroom. Now, it was only a jumble of rent and torn sandbags. His head seemed bursting. He slowly rose on his elbow, and there in the east the dawn was breaking. But what was that mangled shape lying over there among the sandbags? Slowly dragging himself to it, he saw the body of the sentry. One look was enough to know that he was dead. The soldier's head was missing. The sentry had had his wish gratified. He had "gone home."

He was safe at last from the "whizzbangs" and the Allemand.

Like a flash it came to Lloyd that he was free. Free to go "over the top" with his company. Free to die like a true Briton fighting for his king and country. A great gladness and warmth came over him. Carefully stepping over the body of the sentry, he started on a mad race down the ruined street of the village, amid the bursting shells, minding them not, dodging through or around hurrying platoons on their way to also go "over the top." Coming to a communication trench he could not get through. It was blocked with laughing, cheering and cursing soldiers. Climbing out of the trench, he ran wildly along the top, never heeding the rain of machine-gun bullets and shells, not even hearing the shouts of the officers, telling him to get back into the trench. He was going to join his company who were in the front line. He was going to fight with them. He, the despised coward, had come into his own.

While he was racing along, jumping over trenches crowded with soldiers, a ringing broke out all along the front line, and his heart sank. He knew he was too late. His company had gone over. But still he ran madly. He would catch them. He would die with them.

Meanwhile his company had gone "over." They, with the other companies had taken the first and second German trenches, and had pushed steadily on to the third line. D company, led by their captain, the one who had sent Lloyd to division headquarters for trial, charged with desertion, had pushed steadily forward until they found themselves far in advance of the rest of the attacking force. "Bombing out" trench after trench, and using their bayonets, they came to a German communication trench, which ended in a blindsp, and then the captain, and what was left of his men, knew they were in a trap. They would not retire. D company never retired, and they were D company. Right in front of them they could see hundreds of Germans preparing to rush them with bomb and bayonet. They would have some chance if ammunition and bombs could reach them from the rear. Their supply was exhausted, and the men realized it would be a case of dying as bravely as possible, or making a run for it. But D company would not run. It was against their traditions and principles.

The Germans would have to advance across an open space of three to four hundred yards before they could get within bombing distance of the trench, and then it would be all their own way.

Turning to his company, the captain said:

"Men, it's a case of going West for us. We are out of ammunition and bombs, and the Boches have us in a trap. They will bomb us out. Our bayonets are useless here. We will have to go over and meet them, and it's a case of thirty to one, so send every trust home, and die like the men of D company should. When I—ve the word, follow me, and up and

at them. Give them h—! Lord, if we only had a machine gun, we could wipe them out! Here they come, get ready, men."

Just as he finished speaking, the welcome "pup-pup" of a machine gun in their rear rang out, and the front line of the onrushing Germans seemed to melt away. They wavered, but once again came rushing forward. Down went their second line. The machine gun was taking an awful toll of lives. Then again they tried to advance, but the machine gun mowed them down. Dropping their rifles and bombs, they broke and fled in a wild rush back to their trench, amid the cheers of "D" company. They were forming again for another attempt, when in the rear of D company came a mighty cheer. The ammunition had arrived and with it a battalion of Scotch to re-enforce them. They were saved. The unknown machine gunner had come to the rescue in the nick of time.

With the re-enforcements it was an easy task to take the third German line.

After the attack was over, the captain and three of his noncommissioned officers, wended their way back to the position where the machine gun had done its deadly work. He wanted to thank the gunner in the name of D company for his magnificent deed. They arrived at the gun, and an awful sight met their eyes.

Lloyd had reached the front line trench, after his company had left it. A strange company was nimbly crawling up the trench ladders. They were re-enforcements going over. They were Scotties, and they made a magnificent sight in their brightly colored kilts and bare knees.

Jumping over the trench, Lloyd raced across "No Man's Land," unheeding the rain of bullets, leaping over dark forms on the ground, some of which lay still, while others called out to him as he speeded past.

(Continued next week.)

—For high class Job Work come to the "Watchman" Office.

101 GERMAN LIES.

Following is another installment of the 101 German lies run to earth by the St. Louis Republic and reprinted here for the benefit of "Watchman" readers:

LIE No. 28. M. E. R., of Sherman, Mo., says it is reported there that an American transport has been sunk by a German submarine and 500 soldiers and sailors lost. One man was heard to say that he read of the disaster in a German newspaper.

LIE No. 29. That Mrs. Frank V. Hammer, chairman of the St. Louis Red Cross Chapter, receives \$15,000 a year for her services, and that George W. Simmons, chairman of the Southwestern district, \$30,000.

(Both Mrs. Hammer and Simmons donate their services and pay their own traveling expenses. In addition, Simmons and Mrs. Hammer have each made large personal subscriptions to the Red Cross fund.)

LIE No. 30. Edmund Kerruish, merchant, Festus, Mo., says he was informed that the government will not accept sweaters and mufflers knitted for soldiers.

(Col. C. H. Murray, commandant at Jefferson Barracks, yesterday acknowledged receipt of several hundred sweaters from the American Red Cross. He said:

"If you could have seen the line of boys when these comfortable garments were distributed it would have done your heart good.")

LIE No. 31. B. C. J. asks if it is true that the Y. M. C. A. is charging soldiers for beds in France. He says a pro-German informed him that our fighting men were taxed \$2.50 for one night's lodging in France.

(Philemon Bevis, general secretary of the local Y. M. C. A., spiked this yarn. "The Y. M. C. A. does not furnish lodgings in its huts. All service to soldiers is free. Stamps, candy, etc., are sold at cost to the boys in khaki.")

LIE No. 32. That the Red Cross is selling yarn to women who are knitting sweaters and mufflers for the soldiers.

(The basis for this tale is a rule enforced by the Red Cross, which requires a small deposit when yarn is turned over to applicants. The deposit is refunded when the knitted garments and left-over yarn are returned.)

LIE No. 33. Piedmont, Mo., comes across with this lie, which a German salesman of a St. Louis coffee house is circulating: That the "tents" at Camp Funston, Fort Riley, Kan., are without heat in the most severe weather.

(In the first place there are no tents at Camp Funston, which makes this German a liar at the start. In the second place the entire camp is heated by giant heating plants installed before winter set in. The men are comfortably taken care of. They say so themselves.)

LIE No. 34. From Frank Gottingham, Greenup, Ill., comes this story. That the government is going to confiscate all property, paying the owners for it, but then compelling them to purchase Liberty bonds with the money. People in Cumberland county writes, are actually half afraid this will come to pass.

(Cumberland county, or any other county, needn't be one whit frightened by such a fabrication. The government has means of financing this war without seizing any man's personal property and will be able to get along nicely. The government wants the people who can afford it to buy all the Liberty bonds possible, but the government isn't compelling you or anyone else to purchase one cent's worth if you don't want to.)

LIE No. 35. That Mr. Hoover had charge of the distribution of food-stuffs in Belgium, and because he did such poor work he was compelled to leave that country. He then came to America and got the job of Food Administrator here.

(Mr. Hoover was never Food Administrator in Belgium or any other country, except the United States. He was chairman of the Belgian Relief Commission, and only praise has ever been heard from those who are in a position to know.)

LIE No. 36. Here's another food-pledge lie: That the United States is soon to begin starving everyone who signed one of them.

(Do not worry. Just so long as there is food in the world the United States will get its share of it, and the government isn't going to starve anyone. Propaganda by pro-Germans, that's all.)

LIE No. 37. C. E. Johnson, of 2716 St. Vincent avenue, advises the Republic of this lie which has been brought to his attention: That American soldiers in France are either burned or buried on the spot where they fall and that it will be impossible to ever return their bodies to the United States.

(The exact situation is this: American soldiers who are killed in France will be buried there. Their bodies cannot be returned to America until peace is declared. All graves will be marked and identified. It will be possible to have the bodies exhumed and brought home after the war, but not before. American soldiers' bodies are not incinerated, unless by accident.)

LIE No. 38. W. C. Staunton, Ill., says pro-Germans are circulating a report in his section that the soldiers were forced to purchase Liberty bonds and are being paid but \$13 a month wages, the balance of whatever is due them being applied to bonds.

(American soldiers were encouraged in the purchase of Liberty bonds, but were not compelled to buy them. They receive their full compensation every month, and whatever is applied to their bond purchase is deducted by the men themselves and not by their superiors.)

LIE No. 39. G. W. R., of Red Bud, Ill., reports these lies in circulation near his home: That soldiers training at Camp Taylor, Ky., are not fed sufficiently; that a woman who wanted to enlist in the Red Cross was told

she would be made to leave her family to go to France; that a petition was circulated at Waterloo declaring it a mistake to send American soldiers to France, because they would starve; that women who registered would be drafted by the government, and that persons who signed the food conservation pledges would not be permitted to eat home-cured meats.

(Soldiers at Camp Taylor are fed the same as soldiers at any other army cantonment—wholesome, substantially and abundantly; women who enlist in Red Cross work, unless they specify they want to be nurses and see active service abroad, will not be sent overseas or taken from their families; the man who circulated the petition in Waterloo should be turned over to the government and locked up as an enemy of the country; women who registered will not be drafted by the government, and persons who signed Hoover cards may eat home-cured meats whenever they see fit—only they are urged to observe the meatless day each week.)

LIE No. 40. An anonymous writer from St. Louis signing himself "John Doe," wants to know if this is a lie or just pure ignorance: A German woman living near him was chained when soldiers reach New York on their way to France, and get "cold feet," they are put in chains and thrown aboard ship by order of President Wilson. If they show further resistance, she says, their legs are blown off with bombs.

(In the first place, American soldiers don't get "cold feet." In the second place it isn't necessary to chain an American soldier to get him aboard ship on his way to Europe to help knock the Kaiser gallywest. And again, President Wilson leaves the care of transportation overseas to the Secretary of War or the Secretary of the Navy.)

LIE No. 41. Grannis, Ark., says pro-Germans are circulating this story there: That the Americans captured in the first collision in France returned to their own lines a few nights ago, telling of the wonderful food they found in the German trenches, and declaring they had their first square meal since arriving overseas while they were German captives.

(None of the Americans captured by the Germans have been returned to the American lines. They are interned, it is believed, in the German interior. The War Department, through the Red Cross in Switzerland, is sending food to these and other captives at regular intervals, through an arrangement with Germany, whereby the delivery of this food is guaranteed.)

LIE No. 42. Liars in Bunker Hill, Ill., are responsible for this yarn: That Colorado now is housing 10,000 Englishmen, who are bidding their time until Uncle Sam gets all his soldiers and their paraphernalia in France, when the English will rise and seize the United States for England.

(Of course there is not one scintilla of truth in this story.)

LIE No. 43. Here is one from St. Louis: That the commandant at Jefferson Barracks compelled soldiers to take out government insurance, and where the man has no near relatives, the commandant's sister is made beneficiary; that his sister already is beneficiary for hundreds of soldiers.

(Col. Murray, commanding the Barracks, says this is the most infamous story he has ever heard. He urges the men who pass through the Barracks to take out the government insurance, but he has never named or even suggested a beneficiary for the policy.)

LIE No. 44. "A Reader" in St. Louis sent this one: That soldiers at Camp Funston are so poor that they are compelled to spend virtually all of their monthly pay for food enough to keep them alive.

(Camp Funston soldiers are better fed than many civilians in St. Louis. Their food is wholesome, abundant and of the sort which "sticks to the ribs." Ask the first soldier you meet on the street what sort of fare he had while at camp.)

LIE No. 45. German propaganda already is at work seeking to destroy the success of the wheatless and meatless days. If you hear stories of this sort, or that soldiers are wasting bread, or that agents of our allies are selling American wheat to Germany, or similar silly untruths, bluntly ask the person circulating these lies, "Are you a pro-German?"

LIE No. 46. Sarah S—, of St. Louis has a friend who knitted a sweater for the Red Cross. She put her card in the package, asking the recipient to write. She received a note from the soldier, praising the sweater. He would pay by saying he had to pay \$19 for it.

(The Red Cross already has conclusively proven that this lie—similar to scores already circulated—is ridiculous.)

LIE No. 47. Dr. Charles Reilly, oculist, 615 Locust street, says he has been informed West Point officers refuse to recognize by salutation officers in the new National Army.

(This is an unmitigated lie, as newspaper reports, photographs and interviews coming from all points in the United States have shown how appreciative the West Point men are of the great patriotism displayed by their brother officers in the National Army.)

LIE No. 48. Pro-German propagandists are spreading reports that thousands of drafted men are deserting from the National Army cantonments; that hundreds already have been shot.

(Army officers and newspaper correspondents, always on hand at the various cantonments, say the spirit of patriotism is so high and the men so well satisfied that they wouldn't desert if all guards were put to sleep.)

LIE No. 49. Reports are being circulated that men who enlist in the navy before December 15, 1917, are to be grabbed for the army, as the navy now is full.

(Washington has issued an official order allowing drafted men to enlist in the navy up to December 15).

(Continued next week.)