

"OUTWITTING THE HUN"

By LIEUTENANT PAT O'BRIEN.

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(Concluded from last week.)

When night came I looked around for a place to rest. I had decided to travel in the daytime as well as at night, because I understood that it was only a few miles from the front, and I was naturally anxious to get there at the earliest possible moment, although I realized that there I would encounter the most hazardous part of my whole adventure. To get through the heavily guarded barbed wire and electrically charged barrier was a problem that I hated to think of even, although the hours I spent endeavoring to devise some way of outwitting the Huns were many.

It had occurred to me, for instance, that it would not be such a difficult matter to vault over the electric fence, which was only nine feet high. In college, I knew a ten-foot vault is considered a high-school boy's accomplishment, but there were two great difficulties in the way of this solution. In the first place it would be no easy matter to get a pole of the right length, weight and strength to serve the purpose. More particularly, however, the pole-vault idea seemed to me to be out of the question because of the fact that on either side of the electric fence, six feet from it, was a six-foot barbed wire barrier. To vault safely over a nine-foot electrically charged fence was one thing, but to combine with it a twelve-foot broad vault was a feat which even a college athlete in the pink of condition would be apt to flunk. Indeed, I don't believe it is possible.

Another plan that seemed half-way reasonable was to build a pair of stilts about twelve or fourteen feet high and walk over the barriers one by one. As a youngster I had acquired considerable skill in stilt-walking and I have no doubt that with the proper equipment it would have been quite feasible to have walked out of Belgium as easily as possible in that way, but whether or not I was going to have a chance to construct the necessary stilts remained to be seen.

There were a good many bicycles in use by the German soldiers in Belgium and it had often occurred to me that if I could have stolen one, the tires would have made excellent gloves and insulated coverings for my feet in case it was necessary for me to attempt to climb over the electric fence bodily. But as I had never been able to steal a bicycle this avenue of escape was closed to me.

I decided to wait until I arrived at the barrier and then make up my mind how to proceed.

To find a decent place to sleep that night, I crawled under a barbed wire fence, thinking it led into some field. As I passed under, one of the barbs caught in my coat and in trying to pull myself from it I shook the fence for several yards.

Instantly there came out of the night the nerve-racking command: "Halt!" Again I feared I was done for. I crouched close down on the ground in the darkness, not knowing whether to take to my legs and trust to the Hun's missing me in the darkness if he fired, or stay where I was. It was foggy as well as dark, and although I knew the sentry was only a few feet away from me I decided to stand, or rather lie, flat. I think my heart made almost as much noise as the rattling of the wire in the first place, and it was a tense few moments to me.

I heard the German say a few words to himself, but didn't understand them, of course, and then he made a sound as if to call a dog, and I realized that his theory of the noise he had heard was that a dog had made its way through the fence.

For perhaps five minutes I didn't stir, and then figuring that the German had probably continued on his beat I crept quietly under the wire again, this time being mighty careful to hug the ground so close that I wouldn't touch the wire, and made off in a different direction. Evidently the barbed wire fence had been thrown around an ammunition depot or something of the kind, and it was not a field at all that I had tried to get into.

I figured that other sentries were probably in the neighborhood and I proceeded very gingerly.

After I had got about a mile away from this spot I came to an humble Belgian house and I knocked at the door and applied for food in my usual way, pointing to my mouth to indicate I was hungry and to my ears and mouth to imply that I was deaf and dumb. The Belgian woman who lived in the house brought me a piece of bread and two cold potatoes and as I sat there eating them she eyed me very keenly.

I haven't the slightest doubt that she realized I was a fugitive. She lived so near the border that it was more for that reason, I appreciated more fully the extent of the risk she ran, for

no doubt the Germans were constantly watching the conduct of these Belgians who lived near the line.

My theory that she realized that I was not a Belgian at all, but probably some English fugitive, was confirmed a moment later, when, as I made ready to go, she touched me on the arm and indicated that I was to wait a moment. She went to a bureau and brought out two pieces of fancy Belgian lace which she insisted upon my taking away, although at that particular moment I had as much use for Belgian lace as an elephant for a safety razor, but I was touched with her thoughtfulness and pressed her hand to show my gratitude. She would not accept the money I offered her.

I carried the lace through my subsequent experiences, feeling that it would be a fine souvenir for my mother, although as a matter of fact it had known that it was going to delay my final escape for even a single moment, as it did, I am quite sure she would rather I had not seen it.

On one rather I had the Flemish word "Charité" and on the other the word "Esperance." At the time I took these words to mean "Charity" and "Experience" and all I hoped was that I would get as much of the one as I was getting of the other before I finally got through. I learned subsequently that what the words really stood for were "Charity" and "Hope," and then I was sure that my kind Belgian friend had indeed realized my plight and that her thoughtful souvenir was intended to encourage me in the trials she must have known were before me.

I didn't let the old Belgian lady know, because I did not want to alarm her unnecessarily, but that night I slept in her backyard, leaving early in the morning before it became light. Later in the day I applied at another house for food. It was occupied by a father and mother and ten children. I hesitated to ask them for food without offering to pay for it, as I realized what a task it must have been for them to support themselves without having to feed a hungry man. Accordingly I gave the man a mark and then indicated that I wanted something to eat. They were just about to eat, themselves, apparently, and they let me partake of their meal, which consisted of a huge bowl of some kind of soup which I was unable to identify and which they served in ordinary wash basins. I don't know that they ever used the basins to wash in as well, but whether they did or not I did not worry me very much. The soup was good and I enjoyed it.

All the time I was there I could see the father and the eldest son, a boy

about seventeen, were extremely nervous. I had indicated to them that I was deaf and dumb, but if they believed me it didn't seem to make them any more comfortable.

I lingered at the house for about an hour after the meal and during that time a young man came to call on the eldest daughter, a young woman of perhaps eighteen. The caller eyed me very suspiciously, although I must have resembled anything but a British officer. They spoke Flemish and I did not understand a word they said, but I think they were discussing my probable identity. During their conversation, I had a chance to look around the room. There were three altogether, two fairly large and one somewhat smaller, about fourteen feet long and six deep. In this smaller room there were two double-decked beds, which were apparently intended

to house the whole family, although how the whole twelve of them could sleep in that one room will ever remain a mystery to me.

From the kitchen you could walk directly into the cow-barn, where two cows were kept, and this, as I have pointed out before, is the usual construction of the poorer Belgian houses. I could not make out why the caller seemed to be so antagonistic to me, and yet I am sure he was arguing with the family against me. Perhaps the fact that I wasn't wearing wooden shoes—I doubt whether I could have obtained a pair big enough for me—had convinced him that I was not really a Belgian, because there was nothing about me otherwise which could have given him that idea.

At that time, and I suppose it is true today, about 94 per cent of the people in Belgium were wearing wooden shoes. Among the peasants I don't believe I ever saw any other kind of footwear and they are more common there than they are in Holland. The Dutch wear them more on account of a lack of leather. I was told that during the coming year practically all the peasants and poorer people in Germany, too, will adopt wooden shoes for farm work, as that is one direction in which wood can be substituted for leather without much loss.

When the young man left, I left shortly afterwards, as I was not at all comfortable about what his intentions were regarding me. For all I knew he might have gone to notify the German authorities that there was a strange man in the vicinity—more perhaps to protect his friends from suspicion of having aided me than to injure me.

At any rate, I was not going to take any chances and I got out of that neighborhood as rapidly as I could.

That night found me right on the frontier of Holland.

CHAPTER XVII.
Getting Through the Lifes.

Waiting until it was quite dark, I made my way carefully through a field and eventually came to the much dreaded barrier.

It was all that I had heard about it. Every foot of the border line between Belgium and Holland is protected in precisely the same manner. It is there to serve three purposes: first, to prevent the Belgians from escaping into Holland; second to keep enemies, like myself, from making their way to freedom; and third, to prevent desertions on the part of Germans themselves. One look was enough to convince any one that it probably accomplished all three objects about as well as any contrivance could, and one look was all I got of it that night, for while I lay on my stomach gazing at the forbidding structure I heard the measured stride of a German sentry advancing towards me and I crawled away as fast as I possibly could, determined to spend the night somewhere in the fields and make another and more careful survey the following night.

The view I had obtained, however, was sufficient to convince me that the pole-vault idea was out of the question even if I had a pole and was a proficient pole-vaulter. The three fences covered a span of at least twelve feet and to clear the last barbed wire fence it would be necessary to vault not only at least ten feet high, but at least fourteen feet wide, with the certain knowledge that to touch the electrically charged fence meant instant death. There would be no second chance if you came a cropper the first time.

The stilt idea was also impracticable because of the lack of suitable timber and tools with which to construct the stilts.

It seemed to me that the best thing to do was travel up and down the line a bit in the hope that some spot might be discovered where conditions were more favorable, although I don't know just what I expected along those lines.

It was mighty disheartening to realize that only a few feet away lay certain liberty and that the only things preventing me from reaching it were three confounded fences. I thought of my machine and wished that some kind fairy would set it in front of me for just one minute.

I spent the night in a clump of bushes and kept in hiding most of the next day, only going abroad for an hour or two in the middle of the day to intercept some Belgian peasant and beg for food. The Belgians in this section were naturally very much afraid of the Germans and I fared badly. In nearly every house German soldiers were quartered and it was out of the question for me to apply for food in that direction. The proximity of the border made everyone eye each other with more or less suspicion and I soon came to the conclusion that the safest thing I could do was to live on raw vegetables which I could steal from the fields at night as I had previously done.

That night I made another survey of the barrier in that vicinity, but it looked just as hopeless as it had the night before and I concluded that I only wasted my time there.

I spent the night wandering north, guided by the North Star which had served me so faithfully in all my trying. Every mile or two I would make my way carefully to the barrier to see if conditions were any better, but it seemed to be the same all along. I felt like a wild animal in a cage, with about as much chance of getting out.

NEWS IN THE TRENCHES.

The boys in the front line trenches are not fighting all the time, even if their conditions are not the most pleasant. But the soldiers of Uncle Sam always make the best of their surroundings and if there is any humor in the situation they will endeavor to extract it. Take the 311th machine gun battalion, members of that organization publish a little paper right in the trenches called "The Bust 'Em Browning." Russell C. Hughes is given as the editor and their motto is "Enroute to Berlin." The issue of August 16th, has reached the "Watchman" editor's desk through the kindness of a friend and contains the following pert paragraphs:

DISCIPLINE
(By Major C. M. DuPuy)

Your discipline has a deal to do with your success from now on. Your discipline is the printed page on which officers and men as well read of what you are made inside. So what's the use of holding high ambitions if the whole story is twisted, botched, and lied about by your way of expressing yourself as a soldier. Some men resent it when they are told to salute differently, to walk differently, or to stand at attention more smartly. Remember that these criticisms are in no way personal but are made for the best interest of the service. In civil life men are apt to say: "I am what I am. If people don't like me, I can't help it. I am as God made me!" But soldiers are not. They are made by training and an anxiety on the part of the man to make good. If somebody criticizes you don't rebel it with anger but study over it and improve yourself. Don't defend. Reform. Do you walk lumberingly? Do you stand awkwardly? Do you give indistinct commands and then call down the men for not executing a movement in the order or which they did not hear?

One way to success is to get the manner of success. One way to be a machine gunner is to get the manner of a machine gunner—then you'll want to be what you have simulated and the transformation will take place.

A WEEK IN FRANCE.
(A Typical Buck Private's Unexpurgated Diary)

MONDAY
I am here in France. I have a date with Willie, the Hun, that son-of-a-gun from out Berlin way. I knew that Black Jack Pershing couldn't do the big job with the proper polish without the 311th. Always during our long trip, we were given a fine welcome. Just to show the Kaiser that it could be done, they packed me in the back until, for me, there was lots of room to wiggle my ears and toes, but to crook my arm or turn around meant assault and battery on my neighbors. I was plenty comfortable just the same. When we sailed out the band played everything from "Good Bye Broadway, Hello France" to "Yankee Doodle." There was a report around that Major DuPuy burst several buttons off his new blouse so proud was he of us.

For the first couple of days out Uncle Sam played a mean trick on me. He gave me something to eat that didn't agree. I felt turbulent and I thought there was a plot there. I know I wasn't seasick. They said our boat shot down a half dozen U-boats on the last trip. Each night, the story said, they got 2 or 3. If the trip had lasted a week more, we would have put the whole German navy out of business. Then, after the sea trip, came the personally conducted tour of France. I think we circled it 4 or 5 times from the number of hours we rode in the luxurious Pullmans. They only put 40 "Hommes" in a car and they put 45 or 50 in them in the U. S., so that proves we had plenty of room. Now I am learning to hug the Boche.

TUESDAY
Made my grand summer offensive on the French language today. I lost. Took the first 2 objectives of Wee Wee and Bon Jour easily but it wasn't long before the pesky lingo flanked me and got me down and had a strangle hold. Made a rapid but very strategic retreat to my billet.

A billet, gentle sir, is the home of the soldier in France. It is built of stone, made to last till Gabriel bugles assembly. It has hardwood floors, we all know this. It has a tile roof. It is large and commodious and it has plenty of room for all. It has every modern convenience known to the elite of this city. It general travels and cows also so that the mornly milk may be available. Is it any wonder every soldier is tickled to death to be here?

WEDNESDAY
I'm getting sore at the damned bombastic, bumptious Boche. First He drags me across the ocean away from the girl and the U. S. life. Then he keeps me here. And now he puts me in a tin that he calls a home. Some one will get all cut up yet in this war if he isn't careful.

I'm going to learn these instruments of torture that prevent other torture just to spite the Limburger cheese. I modestly proclaim, however, that there is some class to me in the outfit. Even the French lassies look and smile.

THURSDAY
A quiet day. Got up at 5 a. m. Did setting-up exercises cleaned up the streets like a White Wing; drilled at least 8 hours when I lost count; learned the Browning gun so that I can get up in my sleep and take it down, put it together and tell just how it is done; fired on the range and took the whickers off an imaginary "germ"; ate 3 squares that would put pig to shame; walked 15 or 20 miles; squinted at the variety of French femininity here after supper; stood reveille and retreat and half a dozen other formations; wrote 6 letters to the U. S. and then went to bed because I got tired loafing around.

FRIDAY
I'll hand it to the women here. Today I noted that although they don't know what a brassiere is, they can run a farm house, a stable, a vine-

yard, a dairy, and, in the spare minutes raise a family.

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN.

Look to the Kiddies.—The children of the nation must be fed, they ought to have the right food, and the United States Food Administration wants you to give it to them. America's purpose is to safeguard the coming generation. It would be foolish, indeed, to defend the physical condition of the present generation of children by short rations or the wrong kind of food. The children of today must be given those things that build strong bodies and good brains. This can be done without disregarding the country's food program, for the war-time emergency foods are in many cases the most palatable and at the same time the most wholesome for the feeding of children. Milk is the prime requisite of all children's diet. Every child should get a quart of milk a day in some form or other. Besides plenty of milk, he should have at least one cupful of some good cereal (and this can well be some other than wheat) much fruit, only a little meat (for which an egg can readily be substituted) and fresh green vegetables. Fats have an important place in a child's diet. But if a child is given a quart of whole milk every day, that along with the butter on his bread—to say nothing of the little meat or egg in his daily diet—will furnish him with enough fat and will give it to him in the most wholesome form. Some sweets is also good in the diet if given with meals or directly afterward. Conservation sweets, such as dates, raisins, stewed fruits, etc., are the best possible form of sweets for the growing child. Deserts should be of the simplest such as junket, rice, cornstarch or plain custards.

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Concerning Women.
Three jails for the exclusive use of women and to be run entirely by women are to be established in Chicago. Even the patrol wagons will be operated by women.

The increase in the number of women who have replaced men in England's industries now number nearly a million and a half.

More than 120,000 women in Italy are doing the hardest kind of work in occupations formerly held exclusively by men.

Women employees in government plants are to have their health and welfare carefully supervised.

Over 15,000 women can be used as hospital assistants or student nurses in the United States.

The woman's committee of the Council of National Defense has passed a resolution that all women of the United States express their loyalty and respect to the colors and the Nation when the flag is passing or the National anthem is rendered.

On an average the ultimate limit of a woman's capacity appears to be about 75 to 80 per cent of a man's capacity as a worker.

Young girls in England are taking strenuous exercises under the supervision of experts so as to prepare them for hard and heavy work in the government plants later on.

Female millinery workers in Massachusetts have minimum wage rate.

The Labor party, of Black County, England, have nominated Miss Elizabeth MacArthur as their candidate for a seat in the British Parliament.

Waste Paper.
The point raised by Representative Walsh, of Massachusetts, who complains at the reckless waste of paper by the government, when newspapers are compelled to reduce the size of their publications in the interest of conservation of print paper, is well taken. As he so emphatically states, this profligate use of paper entails a tremendous expense to the taxpayers and offsets the economies in stocks effected by private concerns.

"The War Industries Board," he said, "has ordered the daily and weekly newspapers to curtail in the use of print paper and to comply with other restrictions. This edict will be obeyed by the press. Yet while calling for conservation and economy by stern decree on the part of the newspapers of the country, the Federal government has been and is practicing most wasteful methods in the use and consumption of print paper by its various activities and agencies." Mr. Walsh has not far to look for evidence in support of his statements. It abounds in every branch of the government in the form of bulletins and publications, pamphlets and reports, each small in itself but in the aggregate requiring an immense amount of paper and an equal amount of labor. Congress itself sins in the manner in which it pads out the pages of the Congressional Record with useless matter. The government certainly should practice the economy which it preaches.—Washington Post.

Delayed References.
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SATURDAY

Got my new little "Go to Hell" hat today. Some class to it. Here are my directions for wearing it: Grip it firmly by both meat-hooks. Open it like a pocketbook. Duck low like a bulo exasperated. Let right flank get a toe hold on the right ear. Point front towards right optic; spread rest over hirsute scenery; give self a glancing pile driver blow and trust to God that it will stay on and charm La Petite.

SUNDAY
Too lazy to write today. Went to church. Heard a French Priest cuss or praise the Americans, I don't know which. He worked hard. Spent part of the day trying to coax the dirt out of my clothes with a scrubbing brush, a bar of soap, some beads of sweat and a determined disposition. Vive La France.

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Delayed References.
Old Goldrock's chauffeur had joined the army and he had decided that now he would enlist the services of a woman driver for his car. When a young woman appeared in answer to his advertisement she was asked for a reference. "Well, sir, I haven't one now, but I could get one in a month or two," she said. "Yes, but why the delay?" asked Goldrock. "It's like this, sir. My last employer is in the hospital at present."—Chicago News.

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LOOK TO THE KIDDIES.—The children of the nation must be fed, they ought to have the right food, and the United States Food Administration wants you to give it to them. America's purpose is to safeguard the coming generation. It would be foolish, indeed, to defend the physical condition of the present generation of children by short rations or the wrong kind of food. The children of today must be given those things that build strong bodies and good brains. This can be done without disregarding the country's food program