

The Lone Tree Sentinel: or, Ghosts on the Firing Line

By Sergeant Arthur Guy Empey Author of "Over the Top," "First Call," Etc.

Mr. Empey's Experiences During His Seventeen Months in the First Line Trenches of the British Army in France

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One sunny afternoon our gun's crew was sitting on the fire step of a front-line trench, just in front of Gomme-curt wood.

Happy Houghton was busily engaged in rigging up a flash screen to hide the flare of our gun, which we were to mount on the parapet that night.

Sailor Bill was sewing a piece of khaki cloth over his tin hat, because the night previous, while on sentry go, standing in the moonlight, with his head over the top the rays from the moon had reflected from his steel helmet and a couple of German bullets had knocked up the dirt within a few feet of his head.

As was usual with him, Hungry Foxcraft was wrestling with a tin of bully beef, while "Curly" Wallace was hunting for cooties.

Key Honney, with our mascot, Jim, was sitting on the fire-step, his back



Bending Double Under the Weight of the Ammunition.

leaning against the traverse of the fire-bay, picking mud out of his harmonica with a silver of wood. Jim seemed happy and contented, not knowing the fate in store for him. Two days later poor Jim was killed by a German bullet and we buried him behind the lines, placing a little wooden cross at the head of his grave. After working a few minutes at the harmonica, Key would pause, put it to his lips and blow into it; a squeaky, rattly noise resulting. Then, with a deep sigh, he would resume the picking process.

I had just finished a letter home and was getting for the time to come when once again I would be able to say "hello" to the old girl with the lamp in her right hand guarding New York harbor.

Although it was warm and sunny, the floor of the trench was about three inches deep in soft, sticky mud.

On my right I heard a low muttering and a splashing in the mud, and around the traverse, into our firebay, carrying a box of ammunition on his shoulder, came the most weird-looking soldier I had ever seen. As he passed in front of me he turned his gaze in my direction and a cold shiver seemed to run up and down my spine as I looked into his eyes. They were uncanny; a sort of vacant stare, as if the owner of them was looking into the Great Beyond. As this soldier staggered through the fire-bay, almost bending double under the weight of the ammunition and passed from view around the traverse, it seemed to me as if the Grim Reaper had walked through.

Shuddering a little, I instinctively turned my eyes in the direction of the rest of the crew. They were all staring at the traverse around which the gleomy-looking soldier had disappeared.

My heart sank to zero and I had a sinking sensation in the region of my stomach, and on the parados in front of me, like a moving picture on a screen, flashed a cemetery, dotted all over with little wooden crosses. I felt queer and uneasy.

Curly Wallace, in a low, half-frightened voice, exclaimed:

"Blime me, that was 'Aunted Jerry's' brother, the one who clicked it by the old lone tree. If you blokes want to get the creeps you ought to 'ear 'im talk. Some o' the fellows claim that it's unlucky to get 'im started. They say that one o' 'is 'earers is sure to click in within a few days' time, but if you fellows want to tye the chance, I'll go over to 'is section, which is occupying the 'is firebay, on our left, and see if I can get 'im to tell

us about 'is brother. But, now mind, this fellow is a little balmy in 'is napper, so don't myke fun of 'im."

I confess that I was glad to be rid of him, but my curiosity overcame my fears, so I asked Curly to go ahead. The rest of the crew weakly assented, and Curly went after Jerry's brother. In about twenty minutes he returned with him. Jerry's brother came over and sat on the firestep next to me. He sat silent for a few minutes, and then, in a thick, piping, high-pitched voice spoke:

"So you want to 'ear about Jerry, do you? They called him 'Aunted Jerry,' but he weren't 'aunted; he could just see—e could see into the future; could sort o' tell what was agoin' to 'appen. 'E could talk to the dead, and they told 'im. 'E always 'ad spirits around 'im—ghosts, you call 'em, but there ain't no such thing as ghosts—they're souls awanderin' around; they're about us now—I slowly eased down the firestep away from him.

"Jerry used to talk to the dead; 'e would sit in a cemetery at night while in rest billets, and receive messages from them that can't speak no more. 'Sometimes, lyte at night, I can 'ear far aw'y, voices callin' to me, but as yet cawn't understand 'em, but I will—I will."

My blood began to curdle. Curly Wallace, placing his hand on the speaker's knee, softly said:

"Righto, mate, we know you can see far beyond us, but tell us o' 'Aunted Jerry and the pome 'e wrote the day before 'e clicked it at the lone tree."

Jerry's brother nodded in a comprehending way, and reaching into the pocket of his tunic drew out a creased and muddy piece of paper, which he opened up upon his knee, and then, in an unnatural, singsong voice, which sent shivers through us, recited the following poem:

With the lines, in No Man's Land, / Between foliage gone, and trunk that's torn, / A lonely sentry takes his stand, / Silently watching from morn to morn.

On starlit nights, when moon is bright, / And spreads its rays of ghostlike beams; / Against the sky, that tree of blight / A ghastly hangman's gibbet seems.

When night is black, and wind's faint sigh / Through its sheltorn branches moans, / A call to men, "To die, to die!" / They answer it with groans and groans.

But obey the call, for "more and more," / And Death sits by and grins and grins, / And watches the fast-growing score, / The harvest of his sentry's whims.

There they lie huddled, friend and foe, / Ghastly heaps, English, Hun and French, / And still those piles forever grow, / They are fed by the "Men of the Trench."

No wooden cross to mark their fall, / No tombstone theirs, no carved rocks, / Just the Lone Tree with its grim call, / Which forever mocks and mocks.

When Jerry's brother had finished, a dead silence ensued. I, nervously lighted a fag, and out of the corner of my eye noticed that Sailor Bill was uneasily squirming on the firestep.

Letting out a sigh, which seemed to whistle between his teeth, our "guest" carried on:

"Jerry weren't much at cheerful writing, because 'e 'ad a calling. Even back 'ome in Blighty, 'e weren't much for lights nor fun. 'E took after our mother. The neighbors called 'er 'aunted, too, but she weren't. She could see things, like Jerry.

"This 'ere lone tree sentinel Jerry writes about was an old tree in No Man's land, about a 'undred yards from our front-line trench. It was pretty well knocked about by bullets and shell fragments. It made a pretty good guide post, stickin' sort o' lonely like up against the skyline at night. Reconnoitering patrols and bombing parties used it to show 'em the w'y'e back to their trenches, because, y' know, out there in the blackness it's easy to lose your w'y'e, unless you 'ave spirits a-guidin' you.

"Lots of times English and German patrols would meet near the lone tree, and many a 'and-to-'and fight would tye place around its roots.

"At that part o' the line it were pretty 'ot, what with the rifle and machine-gun firing. The only time there would be a lull in the firing was when a reconnoitering patrol was out in front, and then, as you know, you couldn't fire for fear of a 'itting your own blokes. All around the lone tree were scattered many bodies, mostly English and German. Some o' 'em 'ad been a-lyin' there for weeks, and when the wind were a-blowin' from the German lines towards us it were sort of unpleasant in our front line.

"Every time the captain would call for soldiers for a reconnoitering patrol, 'Aunted Jerry, as you call 'im, always got 'is bloomin' 'yme on the list. It got so that after a while 'e never asked if 'e wanted to go; the captain would just naturally put 'is 'yme down as agoin'.

"In our dugout, Jerry would tell me 'ow many dead were around the tree. 'Ow 'e could count 'em in the dark, I don't know, but 'e could see—e could see."

"Sometimes in the daytime 'e would rig up a periscope on 'is own, and sit on the firestep for hours alookin' out in No Man's land at the lone tree, and the bodies around it. This sort o' 'e got on our captain's nerves, and 'e gave Jerry orders not to use a periscope. After this order Jerry used to sit off by 'imself on the firestep a musin' and a musin'! The other blokes laughed at 'im, but I knew what he were adoin'—'e were atalkin' to the spirit of the lone tree.

"Then 'e got sort o' reckless, and because it were against orders for 'im to use a periscope, 'e used to, in the

bloomin' daytime, stick 'is 'ead over the top and gaze in the direction of the lone tree. Bullets from German snipers would kick up the dirt and tear the sandbags all around 'im, but none o' 'em ever 'it 'im. No bullet ever myde could kill 'Aunted Jerry, as you call 'im."

"The rest o' the blokes in the trench would pull 'im down off the firestep. They thought they were a-savin' 'is life, but Jerry weren't afraid from bullets. 'E knew, and so did I, that they couldn't 'arm 'im. Then our captain—'e 'ad brains, 'e 'ad—said that Jerry was balmy, and gave orders to the sergeant major to tye 'im back to the doctors, to send 'im to Blighty. Jerry was told about this the night before 'e was to leave. 'E was greatly upset, and did notin' but talk to the spirits—the air was full of 'em—I could 'ear their voices, too.

"That night about ten o'clock Jerry was missed. The next morning 'e was still a-missin'. For two days nothin' was 'eard of Jerry. Then the Royal Irish Rifles took over a sector of trench on our right. A lot of our blokes told 'em about Jerry bein' missin'. A few of 'em got around me, and I described Jerry to 'em, but I weren't afraid for Jerry—I knew where 'e was—'e were with 'is spirits.

"That night an Irish patrol went out and when they returned they brought a body with them; said they'd found it at the foot o' the lone tree. It were Jerry, all right, but 'e weren't 'is nowhere. Two bloomin' doctors examined 'im, lookin' for wounds. 'E was dead, all right, and that bloomin' captain—'e 'ad brains, 'e 'ad—was responsible for 'is death. 'E 'ad tried to tye Jerry aw'y from 'is spirits, so Jerry crawled out to the lone tree to answer its call. 'E answered it, and now 'e's with the spirits 'e loved, and some time 'I'll be able to talk to 'im. 'E's with 'em, all right, I know—I know."

Just then Jim started to whimper; I guess if the truth were known, we all felt like whimpering.

Without another word, Jerry's brother got up, and muttering to himself, passed out of sight around the traverse. As he disappeared from view, Sailor Bill exclaimed:

"Blawst my daylight, but if a bloke like that ever slipped in the navy, in a fortnight's time 'e would bloomin' well be an admiral, because 'e would be the only one left in the blinkin' navy. Gives me the proper creeps. 'Ow in 'all 'is company stands for 'im I don't know. 'Ow about it, Curly—why 'asn't 'e been sent to Blighty as balmy?"

"'I'll tell you, Bill," answered Curly. "This bloke only gets these fits occasionally 'E's a d—d good soldier—always on the job, and next to Corporal French and his brother 'Aunted Jerry, 'e's the best scout for work in No Man's land that's ever put a foot in these blinkin' ditches. It's only lately that 'e's been 'avin' these spells so often, and yesterday the sergeant major told me that 'e was under observation and that it would only be a short time before 'e was shipped back."

"'Is it a fact, Curly," asked Happy. "that this 'Aunted Jerry crawled out there the way his brother says, and that he was found dead without a

word?"

"That's the way it was, Happy," answered Curly. "I've seen the body myself, and it was the same as the sergeant major said. 'E was found dead without a word."

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The Effects of Smoking on Accuracy in Baseball Pitching.

Some time ago the Young Men's Christian Association College, of Springfield, Mass., had tests made to determine the effects of smoking upon the heart rate and blood pressure. They revealed that the smoking of a single cigar by smokers and by non-smokers alike, increased the heart rate, and made the individual unsteady in writing and less accurate in lunging at a target. An additional test has been made which adds to our knowledge of the effects of smoking upon the nervous system.

Baseball pitching is a highly organized and intricate form of muscular exercise. It requires accuracy, self-control and prompt response of the muscles to the will. It was decided, therefore, to make a study of the effects of smoking upon accuracy in baseball pitching. These tests were held at Springfield College, under Prof. Barry's direction, and recorded by William A. Lang, a Senior student who reported the study in his thesis.

Three types of tests were taken. Twelve men were chosen, all ball players, upon whom the experiments were made. Some were smokers, others non-smokers.

In test "A" the following procedure was followed: The men arrived at the gymnasium at 6:30 p. m. Three trials throws were made by each man at a target 60 feet, 6 inches distance. The results were not recorded. This was done simply to warm up. Then ten throws were made by each man, the results being recorded. Then they retired to a special room, smoked one cigar for which 30 minutes were allowed. Then the men returned to the gymnasium and each threw three trial throws without keeping score, and then ten throws which were recorded.

The target was five feet square, the bull's eye 1 foot in diameter, the circles six inches in diameter. Five points were scored if the ball hit the bull's eye, four points if the ball hit the inner circle, three points if the ball hit the middle circle, one point if the ball hit outside the outer circle.

Text "B" was the same except that the three warming up tests were not taken, and 2 cigars were smoked in sixty minutes.

In test "C" the method was the same as in test "A" except that no smoking was done during the 30 minute intervals.

Here is the following tests of seven men:

Table with columns: Name, Before, After. Lists names Mr. A, Mr. B, Mr. C, Mr. D, Mr. E, Mr. F, Mr. G and their scores before and after smoking.

Do Not Know Where Term 'Electricity' Originated.

Millions of people of today who are living in an electrical age undoubtedly do not know where the term electricity originated, and how it came to use the word universally to signify that power which performs all the myriad wonders that we see daily all about us.

From Elektor, the Greek name for amber, is derived the word electricity, which is now extended to signify not only its power of attracting light bodies with silk, fur, etc., but other powers connected with it, in whatever bodies they may be communicated.

The attractive nature of electrified amber is occasionally mentioned by Pliny and other later naturalists; particularly by Gassendus, Kenelm, Digby and Sir Thomas Brown.

Very exhaustive experiments have been carried out by William Gilbert, a native of Colchester, and a physician at London, who, in his excellent Latin treatise, "De Magnete," published in the year 1600, relates a great variety of electrical experiments, which were all in nature to the properties of amber. He has disclosed several of the substances which had these peculiar properties of attracting light bodies when agitated by a material.

Amber was used by the ancient world as a jewel for decoration, relates the Electrical Experimenter. Its color and luster reminded the fanciful Greeks of the virgin gold which glistened in the hands of Pactolus; even as the brilliant metal itself had receded to them the yellow sunshine. Afterward they applied the same name to the compounds of metals, which, when burnished, have a golden glow. They were all children of the sun Elektor-reflecting in miniature its radiance. Thus in common with native gold and the silver-gold alloys, the amber in Hellenic speech, came to be called "Elektor."

ORVISTON.

Mr. George Bixel is feeling much better.

Lieut. Hume was home from Lock Haven for a few days' visit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Hume.

The young friends of George Moyer gave him a big surprise on February 4th. An enjoyable evening was spent but the scribe was unable to get all the names of those present.

Mr. L. Neff was over from Howard, Thursday, to install the members in our local P. O. of A. Refreshments and general jollity followed the regular business meeting. Mrs. John Hume and Carol Brown told laughable stories and kept the rest holding their sides. Every one was willing to have it all over.

Ward Keller has a dandy little engine that he intends using at the Center Brick and Clay works, removing the coal from the cars. It is a 4-horse power and runs with kerosene. He is quite enthusiastic over his venture and thinks, as others do, it will prove a decided success and eliminate a lot of hard work.

Taught to Repress Emotion.

Until late years the repression of any appearance of a strong emotion was carefully drilled into the mind and life of every Japanese child of the better class. There is much more freedom now than formerly, but the influence of past training is seen everywhere—in art, in literature, on the stage and in the customs of daily life. Artists paint the autumn moon, which every Japanese adores, but wrap the brilliant disk within a veil of cloud.—Ex.

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN.

DAILY THOUGHT.

Nothing finer has come out of the war than this line from an epitaph in a British graveyard in France: "For your tomorrow they gave their today."—London Truth.

Fortunately the silhouette for spring will not be radically different from that of the garment with which milady has already stocked her wardrobe. This means that some of the light-weight suits of winter and some of the frocks which have been worn under winter toppers can be used for the beginning of the spring season without any danger of making the wearer look passe.

With the exception of the top-coats the usual garment outline will be flat and tapering, now and then broken by what is now designated as the "restrained" tunic, that is, a tunic of slight change the silhouette. In the case of a frock this tunic is sometimes a continuation of the bodice and in the instance of the suit it is, of course, an attached portion of the skirt.

The skirts of both frocks and suits are at all times quite scant, rarely being wider than a yard and a half and often narrower. A very slight fullness of the hips, however, prevents that upper tightness which was so ungraceful in the skirts of several seasons ago. When the skirt is slashed, the opening is usually concealed by close-hanging panels or flat drapery which scarcely breaks the silhouette chaste line.

On the whole the spring silhouette follows the natural figure line, the only extreme feature of it being the narrow hem of the skirt. Shoulder lines are normal and sleeves follow the outline of the arm until the elbow is reached, where they widen into kimono or bell shapes.

Suits are both belted and unbelted, many short box coats being predicted. Belted styles usually have a normal waistline. Waists have both normal and long waistlines, while yet others have no waistline defined at all.

There is a noticeable combining of the Directorate and the Modern Age lines in one garment, especially in the stunning coat frocks which will be so fashionable for spring street wear.

Conservative blouses have the three-quarter-length sleeve in the new models. French blue, league blue, bisque and beige, gray sunset and pastel shades of blouse are called for. The blue and bisque are the most popular.

With back panels reaching to the knees, forming a skeleton coat, and the one-piece dress from a popular three-piece costume.

Southern resorts are showing some smart black and white checked suits, with long lines.

For the separate skirt the wrapped effect seems to be the most popular.

A New Note.—The new trimming of looped crocheted chains to take the place of fringe.

Overblouses appear in increasing numbers, the shorter length being the most popular.

Bell sleeves are used in the better grade of merchandise.

Some suit men predict the blouse coat to be popular for the spring season.

Hat Lore.—Taffeta hats are the smart note at Palm Beach.

Straw hats in henna are being worn considerably now.

Silk and crepe hats, trimmed with straw braid, are seen very often on smartly-dressed women.

Large hats are predicted for the younger set.

Bright colors will predominate.

Elongated sailors, with navy blue rough straw brims, underfaced with satin and softly draped blue satin crown, trimmed with a long flat bow on the right side of the brim, extending a little beyond at the front and back brims, is seen occasionally displayed.

Shades of brown are the leading color at the moment. Black, too, adds to the effect by the woman who has a severely plain suit or a black and white checked suit.

It is a constant puzzle and an annoyance to many women that while they have fine textured and pretty skin upon their faces the skin upon the rest of the body is unbeautiful.

Frequently the pores of the skin are large and there is even at times a slight irritation and redness that is most unpleasant and disfiguring. If they but knew it, cool baths will often solve the problem. The skin of the face is kept in condition by the frequent washings in cold water, and you will find that the cool bath will contract the large pores of the skin upon the rest of the body in much the same fashion, and in a month's time you will find a great improvement.

Of course, the cool baths must agree with one, or more harm than good will be done. Best begin them while the weather is warm or by regulating the temperature of the water with hot water during the cooler weather and decreasing the amount of hot water until very little, if any, is used. Besides closing the pores of the skin, the cool morning bath will send the blood racing through the veins so that it will carry off the impurities and so leave the surface of the skin clear.

The cool bath should last but about a minute, just long enough to get into the tub, dash or spray the water over one and jump out. A vigorous rub-down with a turkish towel should follow, and then a minute or two at least of exercise. If you know of no particular exercises that you care to try, a little bit of old-fashioned jiggling and kicking will get you into a glow, and you will generate "pep" for the day.

If you wish to make puff pastry very flaky you brush it over with white of egg each time it is rolled. The white of egg should be very slightly beaten and should be lightly brushed over the pastry when it is rolled out; you then fold it in three, and roll out again, brush over again with white of egg; repeat this the required number of times, which is generally seven folds and rolls.

FARM NOTES.

—One or two bran mashes a week for the horses that are being wintered largely on straw and cornstalks is good, cheap health insurance.

—Stable manure or other fresh organic matter should not be considered in the home-mixing of fertilizers. Manure in itself is a complete fertilizer, but a poorly balanced one.

—A temperature of 90 degrees F. is the best for separation. If milk is cold when separated, there is too much loss of fat. If the milk becomes cold it may be warmed by placing the can of milk in hot water. It is preferable, however, to separate the milk soon after it is drawn and before it becomes cold.

—Horses should not be confined to the barn during the winter on a liberal supply of grain. It is far better to "rough" them through the cold months. They should be given the run of the yard or lot during the day. This should be provided with a protected shed, dry and well provided with bedding.

—Mending grain bags is a job the farmer usually dreads. An easier and better method than the common way is to spread cold flour paste on the patch, put the patch inside the bag, lay a piece of brown paper over the hole, and press the patch with a hot iron. If pepper is put in the paste, mice will stay away. The pressure of the grain in the bag tends to hold the patch instead of pushing it off.

—A Kentucky horseman, while making a trip around the world, determined to find the equivalent of the English "whoa" in every country he visited. He was surprised to learn that the Russian, the Persian, the Turk, the Greek, the Chinaman and the inhabitant of every European country stopped his horse with the same word, "whoa," and that the word was equally intelligible to horses of every nationality.

—At present high price of dairy cows it is an advantage both to producer and buyer to buy or sell cows with records. The buyer does not hesitate to pay the price if records can be shown to justify. It is a mistake for any one to pay over \$75 for a cow, grade or pure-bred, unless the records behind her warrant the price. Don't count altogether on looks, investigate past records as well. The butterfat production tells the tale.

—Oat straw gave nearly as good results in feeding horses at light work as timothy hay, was the conclusion of an experiment at the Missouri Experiment Station. In each case 1400-pound horses were fed 15 pounds corn and combed and two-thirds normal oilmeal daily. At the North Dakota Experiment Station it was found that horses when fed oats or bran and shorts needed about a fourth more grain feed when fed oat straw than when given upland prairie hay.

—Excessive loads placed on wagons with narrow tires are exceptionally bad for any road. Tractors using wheels upon which are cleats, or anything that will cut through or injure the road surface, should never be allowed on country roads. Disc harrows, and in fact any cultivating tool, should be kept off the road. If it is necessary to move them along the road, place them upon a drag, stone boat, or haul them to the field on a wagon. If dragged over the road, they will scar the road badly, break through the surface and start disintegration. No road is in such poor condition as to warrant abuse of this kind.

—Authorities on pork production say that a pig should never see his own birthday; in other words, he should be so fed as to go to market before he makes a year old. The sooner a pig "comes a hog of itself" the better for the owner. When account is taken of the saving of labor and the reducing of loss from disease by marketing animals at seven to nine months of age, instead of keeping them for a year or more, the advantage is almost always with the more rapid growth. The self-feeder system which permits hogs to eat grain at will either in pastures or dry lots, is becoming more and more popular in the corn-belt States. Likewise the practice of hogging down crops. The idea many farmers have, and it is a good one, is to get a hog onto market as quickly as possible and with the least possible outlay for labor.

—The most satisfactory method of applying all kinds of fertilizers has not been worked out as yet. This is especially true of the quick-acting fertilizers, like nitrate of soda. Nitrate of soda is so soluble that it makes little difference whether it is applied on the surface of the ground or worked into the soil or put into the row with the crop. It is largely a matter of convenience in applying rather than the superiority of one method over another. It should be borne in mind, however, that when plants are small nitrate of soda should be applied near the plant in order that the plant may get hold of it and prevent it from being wasted. Of course, this only applies to cultivated crops planted with drills. After the plants have attained good size, and the roots have occupied the ground pretty fully, nitrate can be applied broadcast with little chance of its wasting.

—Wheatless Ration for Hens.—A dry mash, egg ration, as worked out by poultrymen at the Ohio station, is made up of ground corn two parts, bran one part, and meat scrap two parts. This mash when fed in connection with a grain mixture of corn and wheat gave an average annual production of 140 eggs per hen. Other mashes made up of the same materials but in different proportions have not proven satisfactory as laying rations for hens. When a large amount of meat scrap was used in the ration fewer eggs were produced than when a medium amount was fed; similarly, when only a small amount of meat scrap figured in the ration, the egg production was unsatisfactory.

From the entire